THE CELL OF SCHWANN. By Gilbert Causey, M.B., F.R.C.S. (Pp. xi + 120; figs. 40. 21s.) London and Edinburgh: E. & S. Livingstone, 1960.

THERE is little doubt that the cellular theory of tissue structure owes a great deal to Theodor Schwann (1810-1882) and this book devotes a chapter to his contribution. This is entirely superficial and fails to assess his really important contribution which Virchow was subsequently to make the basis of modern pathology. Schwann's stature is much more competently dealt with in Sir Roy Cameron's "Pathology of the Cell."

This monograph contains chapters dealing with the structure of the peripheral nerve, structure of the peripheral nerve fibre, the ultra-structure of Schwann cells, development and tissue culture of Schwann cells, Schwann cells at nerve endings, the Schwann cell in degeneration and regeneration and neoplasms of Schwann cells.

One feels that the subject scarcely justifies a monograph. A few papers in the appropriate scientific journals would have met the case. Furthermore, the cobbler should keep to his last, and the statement that "the late invasion of nerve trunks by tumours in man has long been known and commented upon" would not be generally accepted. Some tumours show a most curious tendency to spread along nerves, others don't.

This monograph, however, brings together a great deal of information about the Schwann cell. We agree with the author that we still have a great deal to learn about it. J. H. B.

THE MAST CELLS. By James F. Riley, M.B., Ch.B., M.D., Ph.D., D.M.R.T., F.R.C.S E. (Pp. ix + 182; figs. 65. 30s.) Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone, 1959.

THIS book is divided into two parts. Part I is an exhaustive review of the literature relative to mast cells. Part II covers the experimental work of the author on the function of these cells.

As one who was interested originally in the function of the eosinophil cell, I found this monograph of absorbing interest. The mast cell, described by Erhlich, has released some of its biochemical interest in a much more lucid way than has the eosinophil. Whilst there is some evidence that it is related to fibrillogenesis, its biochemical activity tends to become more important. Jorpes had already shown that it was an important source of heparin.

Dr. Riley, starting with some observations on experimental carcinoma in mice, has greatly expanded our knowledge of the function of these cells. By a series of ingenious correlations he has shown that the mast cell, though not the only, is yet an important source of histamine production. His observations in this connection are convincing. This cell is then shown to be an important chemical factory, but further functions are likely to be assigned to it, especially in its relationship to fibrous tissue.

This is a most useful monograph, and Dr. Riley is to be congratulated for his persistence in the pursuit of knowledge of this cell which at first sight appears far removed from the practice of radiotherapy. J. H. B.

MAY & WORTH'S MANUAL OF DISEASES OF THE EYE. By T. Keith Lyle and A. G. Cross. Twelfth Edition. (Pp. 759; figs. 305; colour plates 65. 45s.) London: Baillière, Tindall & Cox, 1959.

A TWELFTH edition of this excellent textbook bears witness to its appreciation by students and general practitioners.

The text covers the essentials of modern ophthalmic practice, and includes the most recent advances in diagnosis and treatment.

The procedures required for the proper examination, diagnosis, and treatment of all the more common and important conditions are dealt with fully. The student is not burdened with descriptions of clinical rarities or with detailed operative techniques.

The important relationship of ophthalmology to general medicine and neurology is emphasised and there is a most useful appendix giving the visual requirements for the public services. Wholeheartedly recommended to all those interested in ophthalmology. J. R. W.